



**Panhandle  
Area  
Educational  
Consortium**

*Educational Solutions Today...  
and Tomorrow*

**Patrick L. McDaniel**  
*Executive Director*



*The Mission of  
PAEC is to enable  
all member and  
participating  
districts to attain  
their goals by  
providing:  
\*leadership and  
support services,  
\*maximizing the use  
of resources,  
\*linking schools, and  
\*facilitating  
communication  
across the  
consortium.*

**COMMENTS: FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**  
Washington D.C. 20554

WC Docket No. 13-184

**Matters of Maximizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries**

On behalf of 14 rural public school districts in the State of Florida, The Panhandle Area Educational Consortium would like to request that rules would be adopted that would allow and encourage all schools in the State of Florida to maximize cost-effective purchasing in the E-rate program. We feel that state-wide purchasing co-ops as the one managed by PAEC and acting as Florida's Representatives on behalf of 26 states could result in significant cost savings to our national rural schools and libraries. Florida is now part of the Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEPA) serving states across the nation. This program as detailed on Section H. Line 220 is exactly what Florida is doing right now with all other educational services and supplies.

The Panhandle Area Educational Consortium also would like to propose that the concept of using a hybrid - owned network developed by a consortium of schools would work very well for our small and rural schools. In Florida, the three (3) educational consortia have extensive experience in the successful development of services and products for small, rural districts that otherwise would have been unattainable by the districts. The consortia are Northeast Florida Educational Consortium, Panhandle Area Educational Consortium and Heartland Educational Consortium.

Recent legislation within the Health Care Connect program reviewed numerous pilots nation-wide and determined that allowing the entity (the health care provider consortium) to design, build and operate its own network was a viable solution to drive down broadband access pricing in rural areas. We want the same for our regional education consortia, on behalf of our small and rural school districts. We think this would work very well in Florida.

Therefore, we propose that the FCC adopt the same rules as it did in the Health Care Connect program, with no requirement for a pilot program, and allow schools to create consortia to build and manage their own networks where other providers' pricing is not competitive for the needs of the schools and libraries within the consortia.

Sincerely,

**Patrick L. McDaniel**  
Executive Director